JFK, Cuba, and the CIA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKalgEIj0kw (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKalgEIj0kw)

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SEPTEMBER 27, 2014 | Peter Kornbluh talked about President Kennedy's attempts to open up private channels of communication with Cuba after the Bay of Pigs Invasion. He described the people tasked with the operation and the issues involved with establishing reliable dialogue and negotiations. Mr. Kornbluh is the co-author of Back Channel to Cuba, and spoke at a conference marking the 50th anniversary of the release of the Warren Report. The event was hosted by the Assassination Archives and Research Center.

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history TV all weekend every weekend on c-span 3 next on American history TV researcher Peter corn blue discusses President Kennedy's attempts to open up private channels of communication with Cuba after the Bay of Pigs invasion he describes the people tasked with the operation and the issues involved with establishing reliable dialogue and negotiations mr. Kornbluth the co-author of back-channel to Cuba he spoke at a conference marking the 50th anniversary of the release of the Warren Report hosted by the assassination archives and research center this is about 45 minutes thank you and I am here to introduce Peter Kornblum who I have just met and excuse me I have to go here I've just gotten a copy of his new just gotten a copy of his new book which is coming out on October the 1st on Wednesday so you I don't think you can buy them here yet is that correct I'm sorry but your local bookstores will all have an Amazon I presume FFF thank you my name is Brenda Brody and I've been on the board since about since 2005 and Jim and I can't identify the exact year so that's as close as I can get the National Security Archive Peter corn blues home base was I believe the first organization to be known publicly as NSA I just want to clarify that his organization is what I call the good NSA the NSA I call the other NSA is the National Security Agency and they're the ones who listen to our private phone calls and read our mail and are a core component of our secret government that has for decades done everything possible to fight FOIA suits and deny legitimate requests for access to their historic records Peter corn blue and his good NSA as well

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Peter corn blue and his good NSA as well as the assassination archives Research Center of course has for decades been in the forefront of filing requests and occasionally legal suits to obtain deke classification a release up highly classified and hidden documents the role of both the good NSA and AARC is chasing our historic records relentlessly trying to pry open the hidden hands of the bad NSA and CIA and most of the covert agencies and more frequently now unfortunately our National Archives that continued to veil public records behind layers of classification and secrecy Peter Korn brew has been responsible for two major projects at the good NSA and has managed to extract substantive records for both this is my definition of a hero he's obtained vital records of the Nixon Kissinger overthrow of the first Chilean government in 1973 and his book on that topic several years ago was entitled the pen Ashok Pinochet file a Declassified dossier on atrocity and accountability the documents read like the outline for a lake air a novel to me and he's also obtained many of the documents generated during before and after some of the u.s. attempts to overthrow the Cuban government in 1998 he wrote that was that a book that was a page-turner for researchers that

was entitled the Bay of Pigs to classify the secret report of the invasion of Cuba and here's the sequel coming out soon to be I presume but also to television experience and their hope the big screen whoops and though it took years he's extracted four of the five volumes of the most important history of the

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the most important history of the development of Cuban American history politics policy strategies propaganda and PSYWAR that led to the disaster that was the Bay of Pigs this history was written by Jack Pfeifer as CIA historian who has had access to many but nowhere near all of the documents generated by key CIA components and the groups and consultants from all branches of government that they were worked with what was most fascinating to me is that these volumes confirm that the most important decisions about the development of us attempts to oust fast cast Fadel and supply aus approved government to replace him some of the most important were made by a small group of top officers within CIA most working from Angleton shops from the Navy and elsewhere in the Pentagon here we go and many key decisions were taken without the knowledge of either President Eisenhower or Canada by the late 70s I've been cramming on Cuban history from was 20 years and came across the man I've spent more time with than my husband or my children his name was William Pauley I've gotten to know him probably better than any of his either of his wives or any of the other women in his life I learned he was an inveterate liar chief thief fraud draft dodger traitor and much more and a brilliant con man whose sole shang-chi shock his Air Force was connected to airline activity through Latin America and thence became ambassador to first Peru and then Brazil and used his titles to meet greet and squeeze some of the important very regimen Everett rich men everywhere he played his connections on cash with very top Republicans including President Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers to get himself up to his propellers in top top-level planning he was very deeply involved in CIA's plan

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was very deeply involved in CIA's plan to overthrow the first democratic elected government in Guatemala but President Truman seems to have pulled up the CIA short and it was held over until the Dulles brothers arrived with the Eisenhower Nixon administration and Pauli was welcome in the light house like most people like like most people here I have to here we go hold on like most people here I also totally dependent on documents and it wasn't until Peter Korn blue unearthed and dug out and obtained volume four of the five volume set of historical commentaries on the Bay of Pigs written by CIA historian Jack Pfeifer did I confirm the extraordinarily powerful positions Paulie held and the roles he played in the count intelligence operations leading up to and during the Bay of Pigs these volumes are gold mines for everyone with any historical interest from the end of World War two to now and mine drew these in these volumes it's clear that dr. Pfeiffer had materials withheld from him that he recognized some places where he was played by his managers and others where he was deliberately lied to this is probably why CIA continues to refuse to turn over volume 5 2 Peter corn blew the good NSA and the AR AR C and the rest of us if you believe that they refuse to beliefs it release it because it's just a draft which is what they say it is there are pages in these same volumes 5 volumes that are stamped draft and there are any number of other records elsewheres draft draft that have been Declassified and released what are they hiding another former CIA historian has recently attacked Pfeiffer and what she was to be an attempt to diminish vol 5

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was to be an attempt to diminish vol 5 in the event it's ever to be released contrary to rumors floating that Pfeiffer was the CIA sink event I don't think so volume 4 makes it pretty clear that Pfeiffer realized and made clear that a knew damn well some of what was held withheld from him and he didn't think it was pretty let's everyone here give Peter corn blue and Jim Lazar the present they deserve for working so long and so hard for all of us and send letters to Nara asking them why they are seeding to CIA requests that volume 5 should not be declassified and released we do know that this is accurate because Nara actually sent a letter to Jim that says so so with nothing for her Peter is going to now talk about the what happened from the documents viewpoint in Cuba I'm delighted to be known as the good NSA that's as opposed to the bad NSA we we

realize that our the name of our organization when it's reduced to an acronym and its initials is very confusing and many people out in the world hear National Security Archive and they believe that we are the library or the CIA and I have to go around telling audiences that we are the antithesis of the librarians or archivists of the CIA we're the good NSA and we have a revolutionary slogan documents or death and that that that distinguishes me rather quickly from anybody thinking that I'm a undercover CIA person posing as an archivist I'm going to talk about we're going to talk about the Bay of Pigs volume and the issue of the efforts to get to get that

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issue of the efforts to get to get that material Declassified through a little question-and-answer between me and Brenda in a few minutes but what I wanted to talk about this morning is the chapter on on Kennedy in the new book back channel to Cuba and Kennedy's back channels to to Cuba I think you'll find although some of you are familiar with the contours of this history I think you'll find that the book contains more details than any other place on this rather fascinating history you know that the Kennedy assassination of course has intrigued us all it intrigues me as a historian of us-cuban relations for many many reasons one of which is that this hidden history Kennedy's efforts to reach out to Fidel Castro is so counter to the kind of known image of him of giving the green light to the to the Bay of Pigs invasion of pushing through his brother for Operation Mongoose etc etc and so the flip side of the coin what National Security Council documents are referred to as the suite approach has always intrigued me but of course the most intriguing thing about the Kennedy assassination is a historical coincidence although I know there people in the room that don't think it's a coincidence of the very moment that John F Kennedy was killed at the very moment that he was killed there was a CIA officer in Paris meeting with a high-level mole inside the Cuban military and attempting to pass him a poison pen to assassinate Fidel Castro and at that very same moment Kennedy John F Kennedy had an emissary in Cuba a French journalist meeting with Jean Danielle Morenci journalist named Jean

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Danielle Morenci journalist named Jean Danielle meeting with Fidel Castro at a safe house in Varadero beach having lunch with him fresh fish brought by the fishermen for them and an aide comes in and says turn on the radio the president has been shot in Dallas and the mission of Jean Danielle to pass what he called a message of peace from John F Kennedy to Fidel Castro was aborted at that very moment so it's an intriguing set of circumstances that certainly calls on us to think through what really happened for many many years almost 30 years the Jean Danielle story was the only story that was really known about Kennedy's efforts to approach Castro he wrote about it in the New York Times only a few weeks after Kennedy was killed he had a front-page story he also wrote a two-part article in The New Republic in which he detailed his role as a special boy but over the course of time we were able to get a Kennedy administration file Declassified it was called special contacts with Cuban leaders and it revealed a whole set of efforts to reach out and communicate with Castro about changing the contours of us-cuban relations in the wake of the very dangerous Cuban Missile Crisis let me just go back to of course what we all remember the political climate of the day we had the Bay of Pigs invasion we had the trade embargo and it's aftermath we had Robert Kennedy overseeing operation Mongoose and assassination attempts and all sorts of coordinated pressures and of course then there were the just the famous efforts to overthrow Fidel Castro but interesting enough out of these efforts of aggression came the

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of these efforts of aggression came the first opportunities for actual contact and a kind of a rebuilding of the of the broken bridges that destroyed bridges and us-cuban relations publicly we had and over and covert nastiness against Cuba particularly in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs and the Missile Crisis but in the aftermath of the missile crisis some of Kennedy's aides noted that the Missile Crisis ended badly for Fidel Castro yeah and his relationship with the Soviet Union Soviet Union pulled the missiles out of Cuba without actually consulting him he had been willing to sacrifice his whole country for the socialist bloc and their right

to defend themselves and here the Nikita Khrushchev hadn't even talked to him before agreeing with Kennedy that he would secretly swap the missiles in Cuba for u.s. missiles in in Turkey and so the issue was whether Fidel would be so angry at the Soviets and he was very angry at them that we might seize that opportunity and entice him to come back to us and there was a shift in Kennedy's thinking and it was helped by the fact that he started negotiation secret negotiations with the Cubans to free the Bay of Pigs prisoners I went to McGeorge Bundy and interviewed him just I don't know five or six months before he passed away in the theater late 1990s and I asked him you know why did Kennedy reach out to to the Cubans and he said well you know there was this breach with the Soviet Union Kennedy was a smart guy he thought he could explore bringing Cuba back into the Western orbit and he wanted to see what could be done but as Bundy said you know we had no Department

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Bundy said you know we had no Department of peaceful tricks we only had a Department of dirty tricks and the issue was the issue was how do you do this you know what mechanism since it was too politically sensitive to actually have an open meeting with you know Castro how did you do this and the answer became through the man who was negotiating the release of the Bay of pit of the more than 1,000 Bay of Pigs prisoners James Donovan a famous New York lawyer and Donovan conducted what Kissinger would later call shuttle diplomacy he kept flying back and forth from Miami to Havana meeting with Castro starting in the early fall of 1962 a break in the action during the Missile Crisis and then a flurry of shuttle diplomacy in December of 1962 which resulted in a trade of sixty-two million dollars of food and medicines for the actual prisoners and at the very moment that the prisoners were being loaded onto a series of planes at Christmas Eve the CIA called up Donovan and said you know we have three agents in Castro's jails three American agents from the Technical Services Division they had been planting eavesdropping devices in the ceiling of the new China News Agency that was being built in in Havana Wayne Smith remembers this because he was he was there when they were arrested and you know they were they bungled the whole operation they were a rented apartment above the actual agency and they were just drilling holes in the ceiling and planting these devices and the Cubans were on to them and arrested them threw them in jail and there were about 25 other Americans who had been rounded up after the Revolution

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had been rounded up after the Revolution for counter subversion activities and they were in Cuban jails also in the CIA basically said to Donovan get all these guys out and Donovan said will you release these prisoners along with the Bay of Pigs prisoners and Castro said no but if you come back in January we can start to talk about that and that really was the beginning of talks between Cuba and the United States under the Kennedy administration Donovan came back in January he came back in March he came back in April to negotiate the early release of these Americans Castro thought they were all CIA agents as far as he was concerned three of them actually were bonafide CIA agents and eventually Donovan arranged a prisoner swap for Cubans who had been arrested here in the United States including one who had by accident shot a nine-year-old girl in the back and killed her and had been convicted and put in jail in New York for about 27 US citizens in Cuban jails three of whom were the CIA agents and it was in the middle of these talks as they culminated that Castro said how would we restore normally normal relations with the United States of America and Donovan said to him mr. premier do you know how porcupines make love that Castro turned to his translator Rene Vallejo and said we're quest Beno siendo a lot more cancer so porcupines making love what the hell is that and he said the answer was no he didn't know how they made love and Donovan said very carefully and that is how you in the United States will begin to discuss restoring relations I will help and do the best that I can with that and Donovan came back with this message that Kennedy was

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back with this message that Kennedy was interested the captor was interested in better relations and you know curiously the bureaucracy then kind of went into overdrive for instructions for him they wanted him to go back to Cuba and tell Castro that if he severed his relationship with the Soviet Union and he made it clear that he was pulling all of his agents out of the rest of Latin America then we could talk to him about better relations and this proposal for these instructions were brought to the President of the United States and this document I think is probably the key document when I found this document in the in the Kennedy Library I felt that it was clearly the most important document of the the Kennedy administration from March of 1963 with the President of the United States overruling his aides on these restrictive instructions and basically saying look we want to have better relations with a guy don't give him a set of preconditions that he's not going to meet let's be more flexible on this and by the way I'm damned interested in making this happen so let's let's go forward and it's a quite an interesting quite an interesting document there was an aide in the National Security Council who really deserves tremendous credit Gordon Chase he personally wanted to see better relations with Cuba he kept peppering bundi his boss with these wonderful memos and then Bundy would pass these on in the in high-level meetings with with with with the president and basically Bundy concluded as he told the president that a Tito as Castro was not inconceivable and a full diplomatic revolution would not be the most extraordinary event in the twentieth century and you know as he put it caster or others currently high in the regime might find advantage and a gradual shift away from present level of dependence on Moscow in

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present level of dependence on Moscow in the United States and Cuba on Strictly economic terms have much to gain from reestablishment of of relations and so at the very highest levels even though the ninety percent of the National Security bureaucracy was certainly against this some feelers started to go forward this was the pivotal memo that Gordon Chase wrote where he basically said we look we haven't really looked explored we've explored the covert nastiness and the over pressures but we haven't explored the suite approach that might entice Castro back to us he had this whole PR plan it won't be a headline that the US accommodates with Castro it'll be you know Castro eject Soviet Union from Western Hemisphere you know US pulls Cuba back into Western orbit this was the kind of headline and spin that he that that he put on it James Donovan passed the baton of being an intermediary to an extraordinary reporter from ABC News it was a woman named Lisa Howard and does anybody in the room actually remember seeing her on television in the early 60s she was the most famous female journalist of her time she was the first female correspondent for ABC News she was the first female to have her own news show she's been called the first Barbara Walters because her whole scheme just like Barbara's was to find powerful world leaders and interview them and make a lot of headlines with that and her first major interview is with Nikita Khrushchev 1960 when he came to the UN and then she set her sights on Fidel Castro and began peppering the Cuban mission in New York to let her go to Cuba with a camera crew and interview fidel fidel had not given any major interviews to american television since

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interviews to american television since 1959 this was now 1963 and she finally got permission to go in april of 63 and then of course as anybody as Wayne Smith will tell you and anybody else has tried to see Castro it's it's hard to get to him and finally after being there waiting for three weeks she went to Donovan who was there on his last trip and said please broker an introduction and he went to Castro and he said mr. premier there's a beautiful blonde dish of a reporter wanting to see you I highly recommend that you spend some time with her and Castro gave her this interview the night before he flew off to Moscow for a month to restore his relations with the Soviet Union and he also spent some time talking to her privately and when she came back she shared what he said privately with of course the CIA they were waiting for her at the airport in Miami when she landed they debriefed her and they immediately sent a memo Richard Helms who figures in all of our discussions at this conference immediately sent a memo to the president if you look up in the corner there it would be to your right where that little handwritten PS aw is that that was the mark that Kennedy's secretary wrote on every document that he actually saw presidents saw and in the original

document it's in blue ink and it's quite striking and this is the debriefing report from Lisa Howard and she made it clear Fidel Castro really feels that we could have better relations with the United with he couldn't have better relations with the United States we need an intermediary I will volunteer to do this or James Donovan could do it or Adlai Stevenson could do it but he's willing to to work on this and that was his first feeler now this document how many of you have seen this document before one to Geoff

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seen this document before one to Geoff Morley seeing it anybody else well this document of course is fodder for for some of the issues of motivation when it comes to the CIA and Kennedy of course the CIA opposed this idea of a rapprochement with Cuba and John McCone made his feelings about it felt immediately the memo to Kennedy on Lisa Howard went day before this one on May 1st and on May 2nd as mecon was leaving the country he called his office and issued an edict send everybody in the White House this one paragraph letter saying we don't like this idea because it's gonna if it ever leaked it would undermine everything that we've been working towards in Latin America you know all the exiles we work with would accuse us of betrayal the latin-american countries who we've been bribing and pressuring to to distance themselves from from Cuba would call us hypocrites the whole kit and caboodle of our of our approach so don't go there but you know over the course of time key officials William Atwood who was a deputy UN Ambassador Lisa Howard worked with the Cuban ambassador at the UN to start passing messages back and forth and finally Lisa Howard got impatient and she organized what I call the first episode of cocktail diplomacy cocktail diplomacy between Cuba and the United States it was very interesting for me in my research I went to this man Carlos lechuga in Cuba to interview him about this history and I said so how did this start he said well you know the United States approached us and asked us to engage in this diplomacy and then of course we interviewed in my interview with Bundy and others that were still alive they said well Cuba Cuba asked us

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alive they said well Cuba Cuba asked us reached out to us and so both both sides were saying well we were approached and the truth that matter is it was this extraordinary in the hoods but this extraordinary woman Lisa Howard who wanted to see this I wanted to see movement in us-cuban relations she went to lechuga and she said the United States wants to talk to you the opportunity is at my house my Central Park apartment tonight at a cocktail party and she went to Atwood and she said Cuba wants to talk to you get permission from Adlai Stevenson to come to my house and meet with Carlos lechuga kind of under the guise of of a cocktail party you guys can go off in the corner and that's what they did they went off in the corner they talked bill Atwood told the chuga that the CIA was basically running you Cuba policy lucas said you know feet i would like to meet with somebody you could fly secretly down to to Cuba and this started in the fall of 1963 a countdown of diplomacy there's an extraordinary audiotape on November 5th of bundy going into Kennedy's office and the taping system goes on and bundy says you know the cubans have reached out to atwood and they've and they've offered a secret meeting in cuba should we send him and kennedy says yeah you know we could send him but we had to privatise him we have to create possible denial maybe we should take him off the payroll at the UN a month before he goes so that if it leaks that he went to cuba we can say that he went on his own and that was the classic you know discussion for using back-channel intermediaries there's a lot of episodes of that exact kind of scenario in this book back-channel to cuba using people who could be plausibly denied if it ever leaked that they that they went in

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leaked that they that they went in atwood was going to be the first this tape is on the website of the National Security Archive it's extraordinary tape if you want to listen to it I couldn't play it here know at would did a chronology of his of his meetings and phone calls with the Cubans the date of this summary is so extraordinary November 22nd 1963 he's clearly written this and sent it over before he gets the news that the president has been shot in Dallas and that's the most extraordinary thing about this history is that there was

this buildup of momentum right in the last literally first the last kind of three weeks of the president's life and then in the last 72 hours of his life he he authorizes Bundy to proceed with Atwood Atwood goes to Lisa Howard's apartment and gets on the phone with Fidel Castro's top deputy her apartment had become kind of communications central and they agree that there's going to be a meeting that Cuba's going to send an agenda to the United Nations the United States doesn't really decide Kennedy decides he'd prefer to know have a preliminary meeting at the UN and he needs to know what the agenda is what cue is ready to discuss before he's going to authorize Atwood to go secretly to Cuba and so all of these events start to pile up including two events in the last 72 hours Kennedy gives a big speech to the inner american press corps on cuba in which he kind of issues kind of a subtly the conditions where he basically says you know if Cuba did this in this we really think we could live with the Cuban

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think we could live with the Cuban Revolution and it was intended to send a message knowing that these other things were going on and then of course Jean Danielle goes to Cuba carrying this message he arrives on the 20th of November meets with Fidel for the first time conveys a message then they have a second meeting on the 22nd and continue to talk about this and and they meet obviously having an animated conversation and Fidel is extremely positive about Kennedy's message he starts talking about how Kennedy could become the most famous president in history because he would be the one that understood that the socialist bloc and the capitalist bloc's could actually live together and coexist together on kind of equal footing in a peaceful way and not in a way of aggression now of course this raises all sorts of issues of what-ifs lisa howard went back to cuba in February of 1964 Fidel talked to her and talked on camera a little bit obliquely about the whole issue of Kennedy and later he would tell the sons of Robert Kennedy that it's unfortunate that things happen as they did and that the president could not do what he wanted to do it's a dramatic history it's a history that certainly is a relevant to the Kennedy administration its relevance to the assassination is for all of you to determine but if you want as many details as you can possibly find on it the Kennedy chapter in this book is now available thank you

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excuse me is the is the breakdown off already no we first I first need to know what the break go ahead David David speak step a little closer okay David Kiser ah professor corn boat I've researched this a lot myself and I would have I would be delighted to be able to say that I found what you did but it isn't really what I found it's a question of interpretation and emphasis and I just want to take a second to get it across to begin with you started with those remarks of Kennedy's in March but in April the President had a documented change of heart oddly enough as a result of a crisis in Laos where things were heating up and he said in an NSC meeting why are we easing up in Cuba when Khrushchev is screwing us on Laos or words to that effect and that got the planning for a mixture of covert action and new Cuban groups training and going again but and and the other thing I do want to mention is I would have loved to say that this was about to be a success because William Atwood was both a close personal friend of my family and essentially a second father to me but the data on how his proposal was received which I want to quote from is shows me something else

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quote from is shows me something else and allow me to quote just a second when McGeorge Bundy brought out words initiative before the special group on November 5th those present including McKown knew Alexis Johnson from State Vance from defense and the Attorney General agreed that it would be better for outward to return to private life before meeting again with Castro and they suggested that Vallejo fly to Mexico City perhaps to meet with US ambassador Thomas Mann who would not have been interested RFK also argued the Castro would have to end the subversive activities and arranged the evacuation of all Soviet troops before the United States could discuss a day taunt on November 12th Bundy telephone at word in New York after speaking with the president the conversation which you referenced I called this afternoon with William Atwood and told him that if the president's instruction I was conveying this message orally and not by cable I

told him that the president hoped he would get in touch with Vallejo to report that it did not seem practical to us at this stage to send an American official to Cuba and that we would prefer to begin with a visit Bible a hook to the US where Atwood would be glad to see him and to listen to any messages and I did say that etc yes David I'm sorry all right all right and and I think the evidence is and it's followed up in the quote that in fact they didn't actively want to pursue this at this time that it was being held as an option to pursue at some point down the road and meanwhile as I say the planning for the assassination of Castro knew landings in Cuba some mix of events that would enable them to bring the overthrow of Castro about was continuing a pace and at the highest levels well I can only say what actually happened in those those final days which was that of course in in the bureaucracy was 90 percent 95 percent against this and Robert Kennedy tended to say one thing

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Robert Kennedy tended to say one thing in bigger meetings and other things privately he had to meet his own meeting with Atwood and was cautiously open to the the idea of initiative with with with Cuba the president is on tape in his own office not saying don't send him I don't want to have anything to do with you tell Castro but saying let's explore how we could do this safely and the safety steps were the cautious steps were let's not just send somebody off without knowing what we're going to talk about let's get an agenda from the Cubans sent up let's have a preliminary meeting in New York and then let's see how we go from there and in fact Atwood takes those instructions and in a telephone call with Vallejo on the 19th of November very late in early in the morning like two o'clock in the morning at least a Howard's house conveys that that very information that they're open to this they need an agenda they need to know what the Cubans are want to talk about in the and he can't go to Cuba safely securely right now but there's alternatives and the the amazing kind of irony in coincidence and for me kind of sadness of this this extraordinary history science fact that the president United States is assassin is at the very moment that he's assassinated Castro's agenda is being flown up to to New York and given to the chuga it's a document that I have not been able to recover from the Cuban government yet I'm still working on it but it was one of those pivotal pieces of evidence that that we need in order to see what the cube what Cuba felt it was ready to talk about it at that very time there is no doubt though that the assassination of the President of the United States aborted a series of efforts on both sides Cuba and the United States to move towards some type of official face-to-face meeting to discuss their differences Paul Kunstler Washington DC Peter you mentioned McGeorge Bundy in your

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you mentioned McGeorge Bundy in your remarks do you have any knowledge that McGeorge Bundy might have had prior knowledge of President Kennedy's assassination I have no idea of that whatsoever go ahead over here boy hey my name is Irving Lee given the extraordinary presentation by mr. Vichy on a yesterday it dawned on me the question I didn't get a chance to ask was if Rushmore actually did take place what will the ramifications be and the trans I asked that question to the translator yesterday he said the Cassiar would have been gone and you know we're all speculating of course but the question I ask you is if if the rock brush mode was able to take place what changes would have been made would have would have been a split within the Cuban government on this question with Castro and Che would have been broken apart by this this rapprochement what's your opinions on that what would have changed with the embargo be eliminated Che Guevara was actually the Castro's first emissary to the United to talk to a US official and I had this famous discussion with Richard Goodwin and Montevideo in August of 1961 where che you know for on behalf of Fidel said you know we're thank you for the Bay pigs you turned us into a little aggrieved country into an equal and here's a box of cigars and here's a big box of cigars that's right yeah we we have an article drawn from the book coming out in cigar aficionado in a couple of weeks called cigar diplomacy yeah how adele Castro used Cohibas as a weapon of peace and so you can read about the chick of our story they're nice but you know the idea that there was a huge difference of opinion between Fidel and Che Guevara on

these issues I think is is not accurate it's something that that Lisa Howard and her reports and others who met with Castro played up when they came home but it's not at all clear that they themselves had any in-depth knowledge of the relationship between Jay and and Fidel

00:42:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKalgEIj0kw&t=2521s)

relationship between Jay and and Fidel certainly there were more hardliners who in the Cuban government who were opposed to any effort to improve relations with the United States but you know Fidel Castro held all the cards and all the power in Cuba at that time and certainly almost all the way up till 2006 when he was forced to retire from illness and if he had wanted to do this he would have done it I don't think it would have ended his regime in any way I think it would validate it the Revolution gentlemen we need to make the most efficient use of time as possible so bail go ahead and then dr. Newman bill sin pitch I wanted to ask if you had anything on the background of the arrests of the Cuban officials in New York in November 62 that were used to later to swap by Donovan for the CIA guys in April 63 and I asked because they were supposedly doing a terror plot to blow up Macy's and Bloomingdale's in November 62 and Angleton said later that they were going after military facilities I'm going through some disconnect here well I would I welcome the the researchers in the room who spent a lot of time more time than me looking at those records I think they're important they're fascinating it's a perplexing issue did where these guys arrested for no good reason and charged falsely so that the United State have some bargaining power directly on these for a prisoner swap or and this is possible did castro send these guys they had arrived in october did he send them as part of as part of his contingency planning on the Missile Crisis he certainly was worried that the United States was going to attack Cuba and perhaps wanted to put in place you know kind of a you know an effort in in New

00:44:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKalgEIj0kw&t=2640s)

kind of a you know an effort in in New York to be able to to respond but they were they they arrived at a very odd time in October of 1962 amidst great tensions with the United States and they were quickly you know arrested so in the context of course with the Missile Crisis and all makes it very difficult to know whether just by rote the US government decided they were going to arrest people who were just are coming from Cuba at that time because they might be terrorists or whether they actually had some some plot dr. Newman yeah hi Peter I just want to expand on your answer to the question about McGeorge Bundy having advanced knowledge of the assassination I think I agree with your response and I would add that if you look at the drafting process of n Sam 273 which McGeorge Bundy wrote on a spoke to him about this interviewed about it it's really clear that even though they were thinking of escalating in Vietnam in various ways that he put language in there that he thought that his boss President Kennedy could approve and this was the day before so it doesn't look like he expected the president to be dead it really looks like McGeorge Bundy thought that he was writing a document today on the 21st that John Kennedy would be alive to see dr. Aguilar last question just a point about the business of there perhaps having been the dress doctor kaisers point about there having been to tracks pol scott has made the point that that that governments are always pursuing two three sometimes even for tracks and so the fact that you can document that something was being done does not mean that something else was being done at the same time that's the way it always works and Peter knows that having been a Canadian diplomat and having you know worked at high-level you know political circles himself for much of his career McGeorge Bundy actually told me he was they had he had a word

00:46:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKalgEIj0kw&t=2761s)

told me he was they had he had a word for it wasn't multi-tracking but it was something similar to that and he certainly acknowledged that they were still looking at CIA operations although truth be told they were limited the autonomous operations were supposed to kind of distance the CIA from from these exiles and let them go off and do their own thing so that we would be somewhat less involved but the point was is that he also

that kennedy also wanted to explore a different route and that route was under serious exploration at the moment that he was killed thank you for coming I one question can I ask you one question October the first back channel to Cuba

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END